

# *The* SCEPTRE

OCTOBER



1930

## VIRGIL'S RELIGION

*By Sara Page Tichnor*

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## I WILL

A Story

*By Edith C. Storm*

---

## YOUR HERITAGE

*By Alice Benjamin*

---

... ALSO ...

*Rosalie Loranx Hassell*

*Ariel McNinch*

*Margaret E. Jones*

*Lucia Harding*

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# The SCEPTRE

The Official Literary Publication of the Students of Queens-Chicora College

FOUNDED 1929

Member of the North Carolina Collegiate Press Association

Volume 3

October, 1930

Number 1

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## HALLOWE'EN THEN AND NOW

How different the Hallowe'en of today from that of Roman times, for doubtless our celebration of October 31 is a remnant of the Roman and Druidic superstitions. The former held a Festival of Fruits in honor of the Goddess Pomona on the first of November, while the Druids — priests of the Celts — lighted their huge bonfires on All Hallows Eve to frighten away the wicked spirits that were prowling around, and to honor the Sun-god in Thanksgiving for the harvest.

In Europe there came about a widespread belief that ghosts and witches walked abroad on this night — that the night was a holiday for Elves and Brownies.

Today, in Roman Catholic countries, this is a time set apart to visit the graves of the dead and to place flowers thereon.

In Great Britain and in America, the old Roman and Druidic ideas remain, for it is a night of revelry, of divination of the future. Do not witches walk abroad? Are not bats always blacker and more stealthy on this night, owls more weird?

Even our old custom of apple-ducking is derived from the important part this fruit played in the Roman celebration. (Apples represented the winter stores allotted the Romans by Pomona.) Perhaps some relation might even be traced back from the ringing of door-bells, or the removal of gate-posts! We might well consider the way in which we spend our Hallowe'en—lest we make fun in a way displeasing to the august inaugurators of this so-long-celebrated night, lest we offer them cause to cut off our winter harvest, or to send us fortunes scant and hard.

—*The Editor.*





## HALLOWE'EN

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Ghostly<br>Goblins,<br>Ghostly<br>Cats,  | 2. Grotesque<br>Figures,<br>Flying<br>Bats, |
| 3. Broomstick—<br>Witches<br>Always<br>Seen | 4. October<br>Night<br>of<br>Hallowe'en.    |

## THOUGHTS

A world drenched in moonlight. People, moving here and there, suddenly seem to disappear. Their shadows, on a background of gold, become like things alive. They are our conscience or unhappy memories which are behind us. They moan, they groan, they grow big, they grow small. Dancing, mincing, prancing creatures of the past. We are afraid! They ride on broom-sticks, become witches, and ghostly forms. We run, they follow. They vanish not away.

Oh let us beware! Let us not do things and say things that will create shadow selves, for they will never die. We cannot kill them. Let us make today a day of gold and tomorrow there will be no shadows. Let it be only on Hallowe'en that we find trailing behind us black and darkened figures.



by Sara Page Tichnor

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## VIRGIL'S RELIGION

If Virgil could return to this world for the celebration of his two thousandth birthday, he would doubtless be surprised to find a world so different from his own—a world at least partially Christianized, doing him, a pagan poet, homage greater than he ever expected even of his own country. The shy, gentle, modest poet, who ordered the manuscript which had been ten years in the making, to be burned, would probably be amazed at the amount of acclaim being accorded him. He would find colleges celebrating his anniversary with lectures, programs, and even a play based on his work—for at William and Mary College the Phi Beta Kappas have just presented a pageant dramatizing the sixth book of his *Aeneid*. He would find literary folk everywhere re-reading and studying him, and marvelling at the reflections of his philosophy and work found in the works of poets from his time to ours. He would also learn that his influence has extended even through the Dark Ages, when all other classic authors were forgotten, and still lives in all the rush and bustle of our modern world. He would learn that in every period he has been an inspiration and a source of thought for great writers, among whom are the later Latin authors: Dante, Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Robert Browning. He would hear on all sides praise of his poetic and literary worth. But would he find that we know him as a man as well as a poet—that we understand the part of him that goes deeper than these things and is responsible for his lasting influence on literature?

Hoping that we may go farther in appreciating



this side of his character and thus reach a broader conception of his art and influence, we should like to inquire here into the real character of the man, his religious feeling and beliefs. For these are the things from which we shall learn of the poet as a man, as a human being, with hopes and fears and puzzlings over the nature of things. These are the things, too, which determine his influence both on poetry and on religious thought.

Virgil's influence on character has, we find, been just as great as his influence on literature. Virgil had a great effect on the character of the young Emperor Augustus, who would probably have become like chief councilors, the worldly, scheming politicians Pompey and Croesus, if it had not been for his friendship with Virgil. Instead he became one of the greatest and best of the Roman Emperors. Virgil also brought about a change for the better in the religious, and consequently in the moral life, of the whole country. After the *Aeneid* was published, there was a great revival of the old religion, so that men who lived after Virgil were more concerned with religious matters and tried to be better than those who lived before him. Thus he helped to pave the way for the new religion, which was greater than anything other men of his time could even imagine.

Indeed, Virgil wrote all three of his great works with the express purpose of ennobling his countrymen, by stirring up interest in the old virtues of the sturdy Roman race. It is this motive that distinguishes him from the other poets of antiquity, even from the great Homer, whom he emulated. Virgil first tried to work out a scheme of things divine, and



concerned himself with the mystery of life and death. Tennyson appropriately speaks to him as

“Thou who seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind,

“Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind.”

He looked forward with wistful hope to a life beyond in which the wicked would be punished and the good rewarded. He was able to understand the depths to which transgression can bring the soul, without understanding clearly the way of escape. Yet he did, to a certain extent, predict the way of escape in that he prophesied the coming of a Saviour. A whole half-century before Christ's work was accomplished, Virgil wrote, in his fourth Eclogue, of a babe, born of a virgin, that should bring about the return of the Golden Age, under whom if any wickedness remains it shall at least cease to cause terror to the world. So it seems that Virgil had the piety and faith to receive a truth so far above men's common thought, and to predict “a greater kingdom than Rome and a greater king than any of the Caesars.”

How simply, yet how forcefully, has Thomas S. Jones, Jr., voiced his own praise in his poem, “Vergil.”

“Low lie the laureled Caesars while he sings  
Of olive-press and vineyard's rich increase,  
Or upland flocks with dew upon their fleece  
Drinking at twilight by Etruscan springs;  
Through their long-vanished loveliness he brings  
The golden dream where Dante found release,  
And in his music's deep autumnal peace  
Grave pity broods above the tears of things.

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His empire has outlasted Roman pride,  
The age of gold whose splendors half disclose,  
Through doom and death, the goal toward which  
men grope;  
Poet and Prophet, Vergil still is guide,  
As when, in depths of hell, heaven's perfect rose  
Blossomed from inextinguishable hope."

*by Mae Norton Morris*

## JWELED OCTOBER

*Selected*

Oh jeweled October—go slow!  
Your emeralds and rubies aglow,  
Sapphire and diamond,  
Topaz and pearl,  
Set in the purest of gold in the world.

No court of a king ever shown  
With splendor surpassing your own—  
O'er flaming hillocks  
Fling your grey veil,  
Lest in the evening the silver star pale;

Then let the wise world hurry by,  
For riches and fame what care I?  
Only to loiter  
Mid woodland ways—  
My wealth thy beauty, Oh bright jeweled days!



by *Ariel McNinch*

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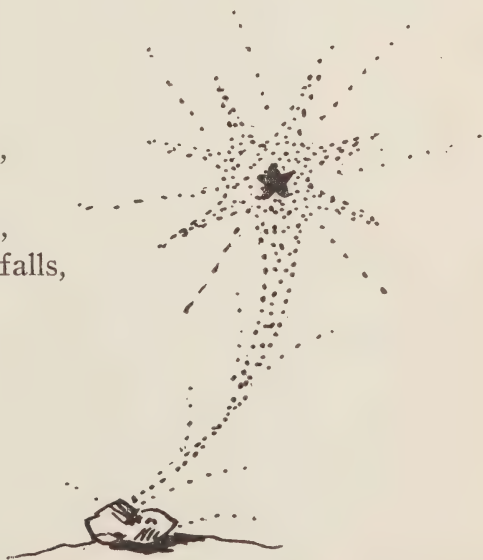
## SOLITAIRE

I seem to see you  
In everything, carelessly shuffled  
Before me, in a tangled heap,  
Prophetic under green shellac.  
Eagerly, indiscriminately, I draw  
A card. You please me as the  
Jack of hearts; gay, debonair, fascinating,  
Enchanted, I dare gamble twice.  
Diamonds intrigue, they are so dear,  
I like to think of you as one  
Scintillating, seductive, and so  
Just once again, I play with Tantalus  
And I have drawn  
A king of spades, sinister and leering.  
I fling it down—shuddering  
At my idiosyncrasies,  
But then, I have always hated  
Green—It is an ugly color.

by *Ariel McNinch*

## MIRAGE

She looked upon him as a star,  
In one of Solar's halls;  
Blinded by radiance from afar,  
Forgetting that when a star falls,  
Its warmth will soon fail,  
The glow be dimmed,  
The star become  
A mere  
Stone.



*by Edith C. Storm.*

## "I WILL"

"Don't be a nub. I wouldn't marry him now for anything."

"But I thought you—"

"I do. He's the sun and moon and stars to me, but just the same I wouldn't marry him. Not a chance, so turn your pretty head over and go to sleep."

"Why not?"

"Well, to begin with, I don't want to marry a schoolboy."

"Charlie finishes at the University this year."

"Oh, yeah? And there's just that little matter of med. school and hospital work and establishing a practice. I c'n hear the wedding bells now—in the distance." She snuggled closer to her bedfellow. Funny the things you said when spending the night.

"If you're as crazy about him as you say you are, you could marry anyway this spring and go on to school next fall. Jane and Bob did that, you know, and are getting along fine. And, Evelyn, Charlie's family could—"

"Mebbe they could, but I'm marrying Charlie, not his family's pocketbook. 'Sides I'd just as lief go away to school. Janet, quizzes aren't so hot—which reminds me, that old fool flunked me on French—but look, my dear, at the other side of the picture—where have I heard that before? Socks to be darned and dishes to be washed. Ugh!"

Janet administered an understanding squeeze. "Charlie will be disappointed when he learns how flatly you turned him down."

"Say, why this John Alden act, anyway?"



"Well, Evelyn, a girl must be a bridesmaid some time in her life; and you looked like my best bet."

"Yes, these old maids of nineteen must consider such things. Don't you worry, curly locks, you'll be dame-of-honor at my wedding. Promise you."

There was quiet for a few minutes in that softly darkened room.

"Really, Janet, putting age and all such minor considerations aside, I would have no business marrying Charlie. I don't suppose I can write, but I won't find that out until I'm graduated and meet the disillusioned critics face to face. You can say all you want about a woman having a career and a husband, but a husband is enough career for any woman to handle."

"Amen!"

"And there couldn't be two careers in the Murdock family. Charlie's going to be a great surgeon. He's got to be. I'm about as modern as the original Eve, I s'pose, but I do think a man should be the head of his house. As yet, I haven't had so much freedom that I'm willing to give it up. I don't know whether we could live together; we're too moody. We'd be awfully happy or awfully unhappy—either the wine or dregs. People say married life is meat and potatoes."

"Kinda mixed up there."

"I know, but you know what I mean—and 'sides mother'd have a double duck fit if she thought her daughter was seriously contemplating matrimony."

"You don't seriously contemplate anything, Evelyn James, and you know it. You just jump into things, and then have to do your thinking."

"Do not. I'm not the same impulsive creature that you knew in high school days. You now have

before you—or rather in bed with you—the epitome of—of—what is it?

“Too late to think now; I’ve been yawning for the last half-hour.”

“Well, night, Janet.”

“Night.”

The girls disentangled themselves and turned over for the night.

“Say, how do you s’pose the football game will turn out?”

“Navy will win.”

“Now, Janet, what makes you so sure?”

“Go to sleep or I’ll tickle.”

The moon peeked in through the window, but a cloud veiled his curious eyes. The objects in the room stood out; the frilly dressing table, the desk.

Brrr—Brr—

“Oh, darn! That telephone would ring when everyone was away. Let it ring.”

“You’d better answer, Evelyn. May be your mother. Scared?”

“No,” sliding into slippers and “neg,” “but you can come along.”

“Hello? Miss James speaking. What? Accident? When? Where? Is he badly hurt? Sure, Right away.”

Janet stared at her friend. Evelyn’s eyes looked wild; her long, disheveled hair gave her an eerie look; her hands wouldn’t keep still.

“Janet, Charlie’s hurt—bad. I’ve got to go. Wants me—His mother called. Oh, Janet—at the Mercy, operation and everything!”

The tall, slim girl walked up to the long white mound on the high hospital bed, her body functioning automatically. Her mind was groping about, pick-



ing up stray bits of unnecessary things. How had they found a bed long enough for Charlie? Didn't his mother look old? Was she changed as much? The nurse's cap—How would she look with one on? Charlie's eyes opening now—Ether—ether—stifling. Insane desire to laugh—Hoped she wouldn't be sick. Looked funny with the bandage on his head. Like a Turk—no, like a doctor in an operating room. All his bright unruly locks hidden. Had they shaved his head? If they had dared—

"Evelyn?"

What was the matter with his voice? Gone. Barely a whisper.

"Yes, Charlie." Who said that?

"I want Evelyn."

She bent and lightly kissed his hot dry lips. His roving blue eyes focused on her, blinked, seemed to see her.

"Evelyn?"

"Yes, lover." She smiled.

"Stay." He essayed a smile.

She almost cried. Charlie's smile was quick. This wasn't Charlie, not her Charlie. She had sat for hours it seemed, holding his left hand. Patches of adhesive on it. She was stiff. Chair would creak if she moved. It was that kind of chair. Mrs. Murdock in the shadow. Her only boy; her only son. Did a mother love like that? She'd have more than one child. Oh, her back!

The nurse beckoned to her. Gently she tried to release the hand, Charlie's hand. His fingers unconsciously tightened, and his lips formed "Evelyn."

In the hall now. Such a relief. Janet's arm around her. Good old Janet, always there. Mrs. Murdock talking.

"Not driving fast—wet road—after sundown—truck with no light—skidded—bank—turned over—going from home back to school—Mr. Murdock and I came immediately."

She came immediately, too, didn't she? Where was Mr. Murdock? There with the doctors. Old, too.

"Janet, where's a mirror?"

Mrs. Murdock's raised eyebrows. Like a hag. Shadows under her eyes—no color. No wonder Charlie hadn't known her. Better perk up, old girl.

The conclave broke up. Mr. Murdock went to his wife, drew her aside. She was crying on his shoulder. Did love last—really last? Mother and dad, of course, but—

"Yes, doctor," she brought herself back with a start. Janet had had to shake her to catch her attention.

"Feeling all right? Let me see that pulse. . . . It really isn't ethical to say this, but I think you should know."

"I understand, doctor."

"Well, I wanted to be sure that you did, so that you would do anything he asked. He raved about marrying you before the operation."

"Oh, no, not that," the low cry sounded as if it had been pulled from her lips.

"He was delirious then, but he may suggest it again. I believe I would do it if I were you. It won't be for long."

"Don't, oh, don't say that."

"Of course, my dear, we can't be sure of anything. Everything that could possibly be done has been done. It isn't in our hands. However, I shouldn't refuse him anything. Come, suppose you lie down in here."



"You'll call if—"

"Certainly."

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here—"

Evelyn beside Charlie's bed heard her minister's voice as if in a dream. This wasn't a real wedding. Poor Janet—gypped of her "best bet." No fluffy dresses. Superfluity of flowers, however.

"—Or else hereafter hold his peace." Why didn't someone say something? Anything. She shouldn't feel this way. Wasn't she helping some one? Christian duty—but marriage shouldn't be that way. Her mother's eyes—Didn't she know that it wasn't for long? No, not that—Charlie would live.

"I will," Charlie's voice a little stronger. Excitement. His eyes bright.

"Evelyn, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband—?"

Would she say it right? Oh, hurry.

"I will." Easy.

She blinked back the tears. Charlie couldn't put the ring on. His right hand—his doctor's hand—was crushed. Maybe—The ring felt strange; she wasn't herself anymore. She was Evelyn Murdock. Mrs. Charles T. Murdock, Junior.

"Amen."

She was alone now with Charlie, her husband, a stranger.

"All mine now, Little Jim?" Ah, there was Charlie. His eyes spoke, dear eyes.

"All yours, lover."

"Oh, those cold, hard, bare white walls! They shut her in. She couldn't breathe. She wanted to get out; she must get out. The ring, it was burning like a circle of fire on her finger. Trapped. Charlie

looking at her. She must draw a curtain over her eyes—"tell-tale eyes" Charlie had told her centuries ago. She lifted her head and saw the walls. She would go mad. Prison.

"I love you."

It was as if a band had suddenly been loosed. Love! The walls didn't matter. The ring told everyone she belonged to Charlie. "I love you." It was heaven.

"Good morning, my husband," Evelyn smiled happily at the slowly improving convalescent. He would be more hers when he was out of the hospital.

"Morning."

Oh, it was great to see Charlie smile, no matter how weakly—those long days and longer nights when they hadn't known. Nightmare.

Another day of reading—quiet talking—long silences. How could she have been so blind? Not want to marry Charlie? Little idiot that she was. The things she had been unconsciously wanting were hers. Completeness—Peace—No need for anything that did not immediately concern them—Us—We—magic words.

"Evelyn, what are we going to do?"

"Live, boy, live gloriously."

"Darling—I meant—"

"Your father said last night he hoped you'd come in with him."

"I don't suppose I'd be such a howling success as a lawyer, but I can never be a doctor now." He glanced wryly at his bandaged arm.

"Charlie, don't."

"Evelyn, I hate to think of your lovely, strong, young body being tied to a cripple—Giving up—"





"Hush, you don't know what you're saying. Don't you know I love you—the real you—the you an automobile accident couldn't even touch? Smile, no, really smile. There now. Don't you ever even think such morbid thoughts again. Crazy—I didn't give up anything, but I gained the whole world when I said 'I will'—Kiss me or I'll make the nurse give you some awful, awful medicine."

"How's Charlie?" Janet came into the room next to the patient's, where Evelyn had been for several weeks.

"Just great today. But you know, Janet, he's getting the queerest notions. I'm worried about him. He talks about how unfair he was insisting that I marry him when he was sick and about giving me a divorce. He is quite morbid at times. Let's leave this door open so I can hear in there. He's asleep now. Nurses don't know anything about watching my husband." Evelyn laughed happily.

"Quite the staid matron, aren't we? When are you coming back to school?"

"Not."

"Why, of course you are. What else are you going to be doing?" Janet's voice was sharp; a friend's can be.

"Just as soon as Charlie can leave the hospital we are going to get a little house or apartment. You know he can't use his hand. Janet, I don't suppose he'll ever be able to."

"Don't, Eve. You have him, don't you?" Janet was so comforting, even though disapproving.

"We think we'll read law together, for a while anyway, until he can go back to school."

"But Evelyn, it isn't fair. It's horrid. Law's musty; you'll hate it. He's taking everything. I

thought you wanted to go away to start a career. Oh, by the way, remember those stories I sent away for you 'cause you didn't want to receive the rejection slips? Well, I heard from them this morning. Want all you can send. Oh, it's grand. Here's the letter. Congratulations and all the rest of the hooey."

Evelyn took the letter, glanced at it musingly, smiled crookedly, tore it slowly—again more viciously.

"Evelyn," Janet put out a protesting hand.

"That's all over, Janet. Might have done it once. Oh, Janet, I wanted to. All my life I have wanted to write. I've dreamed about it. It has seemed a part of my life, a real part of me. Everything I have ever done has been toward that end. I wanted my chance to prove my ability. But not now." She shrugged. "I married the man. Don't misunderstand me; I'd do it again. I'm glad I did it. 'Sawfully nice,' she smiled shyly.

"But you wouldn't have married Charlie if you hadn't thought—"

"Hush! I'm Charlie's wife now. He needs me more than I need me. *Comprenez-vous?*"

A sudden thud in the adjoining room. An outcry from the nurse. A low moan.

Evelyn stumbled to her feet and into the room. She gazed in horror at the sight. Charlie half on the floor. Blood. The nurse ringing the bell. Flying footsteps.

Charlie didn't move. He was—

She sank into a crumpled heap at Janet's feet and heard indistinctly the nurse speaking to the doctor.

"—He must have done it intentionally—had been normal and happy—suddenly rose up and threw himself—"



*by Inez D. Delinger*

## SEASONAL

*The*  
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Bleak fall day,  
Damp grass and feel of rain,  
Yellowed leaves, the inroad of decay,  
Hope in my heart,  
Stout boots, a friend  
Fields and woods to trample in—  
Linger—though seasons have their end.

*by Inez D. Delinger*

## METAMORPHOSIS

It used to be that books were bound  
In sober hues of red and brown,  
With ornamented flowered covers  
And type that irked the optics of book lovers!

Then science, progress, what you will,  
By alchemy devised, until  
Books may no longer be neurotic,  
But radiant, vital, charming, and exotic!



*by Rosalie Lorenz Hassell*

## MOUNT YASHIMA



The solemn toll of a temple bell, the *yo su jin nu nu* priest, the clapping of hands in prayer, and the clattering of wooden shoes on grey flagstones — these were the only sounds which broke the silence of that sacred hour on Mount Yashima.

This mountain stretches its gloomy form, like a hogback, along the southern coast of Japan near Takamatsu harbor. It is a point famous in the history of its nation, for, nine hundred years ago, two clans, the Heiki and the Genji, engaged in bloody conflict on its summit. The former, seeing that defeat was near at hand and not wishing to surrender to the latter, were forced over a steep cliff into the sea. After the battle, the victorious Genji washed their gory swords in a spring on the battle-field. At this act, as the legend goes, the spirits of the departed took the form of man-faced crabs, which sprang out all over the mountain top.

Every year since this event took place, pilgrims have come from all parts of Japan to worship the spirits of their ancestors at the shrines erected to their memory. Each pilgrim takes home with him one of these red, man-faced crabs, mounted on cotton, as a sacred relic of the heroism of his brave forefathers.



by Alice Benjamin

*The*  
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## YOUR HERITAGE

Queens-Chicora! Queens College of English origin and Chicora of Indian lore have become Queens-Chicora and are one. The name represents two worlds. Queens comes from the old world with its wealth of tradition; Chicora comes from the new world with its fullness of promise.

As the white man shared his tools and learning with the Indian, and as the Indian shared his crafts and lore with the white man, these two schools of the church have come together, combining their priceless pasts, their ideals and their pledges of loyalty and goodwill.

Each school as a unit had high ideals. They were ideals of Christian character, sincerity of purpose, and loyalty.

There is no finer thing than Christian character, unless it is the influence of that character upon others. These institutions realized the value of cultural contacts and the atmosphere of refinement, and made them essentials. The professional women, teachers, and home-makers who have been trained in these two schools have had extensive range of influence.

There is no way to succeed other than by striving earnestly toward a goal. That goal should be a noble one. With this in mind, these two institutions, struggling through conditions many times adverse, have stood firmly for the principles set as their goal.

A college is more than administration, or faculty, or students, or buildings. A college is in reality all of those things in an environment created by the

daily contacts of those who make up the campus community. The girls who have lived at either Queens or Chicora throughout their years of college life—girls of promise, girls of talent, and just girls—made the relationship of the two colleges harmonious.

Now they are combined with one great purpose. All that is noble and best in the aims and traditions are doubly strengthened through this union.

In little affairs of campus life, as well as in the greater activities, we may make or mar this heritage.

*by Ariel McNich*

## MASKED SORROW

Tenderly I placed it there,  
A scented wisp of curly hair,  
Soft upon my outstretched palm  
Poignant memories bade the calm  
Within my heart to slowly give  
Before the hurt which now will live  
Behind the portals of a smile,  
Forced—as any stubborn child.

A tiny curl! So soft and sweet.  
The day she nestled at my feet,  
Her head so light upon my knee,  
I clipped it, wondering did she see?  
How could I know that on the morrow  
Death would flood my world with sorrow.  
Without her, life is dark—a fog  
She was my all—my poodle dog.

by *Lucia Harding*

*The*  
SCEPTRE  
*October*  
1930  
◆

## FORGETTING

I try to forget you,  
It seems all in vain,  
There is no forgetting,  
Only memories and pain.

The perfume of a rose,  
The gleam of a star,  
Bring you so near me,  
When you are so far.

The things that you said,  
The things that you'd do,  
Are all so a part of  
My memory of you.

Your ideas and ideals  
All were so fine.  
They helped in the making  
And molding of mine.

The dream in your eyes,  
The smile on your face  
Are memories, beloved,  
I cannot erase.

Our dreams of the future  
Are things of the past,  
But the moments we had  
Are things that will last.



by Margaret E. Jones

## APPEAL

The stars and crescent hung in a canopy of onyx,  
A country lane was silvered by their gift of light,  
and beautified

By sumach and graceful willows, ferns and various  
grasses;

The moaning of the frogs and boasting of the crick-  
ets and song of a distant night bird  
filled the atmosphere.

The manifold electric lamps shed forth golden rays  
through opaque shields.

Upon black asphalt, on which sped numerous auto-  
mobiles,

From which issued vain conversation—to be beaten  
against drumless ears

and forgotten in the next breath.

God grant that they may not be content

With the sole against the pavement,

With bells and buzzes and soupy smells of restau-  
rants.

Grant, rather, that they may walk the silver rural  
path,

And love the coolness of the willows, and the frag-  
rance of the ferns.

### AN ANNOUNCEMENT

To the student submitting to *The Sceptre* the most meritorious work during 1930-1931, *The Sceptre* will award a substantial prize. No single contribution will be considered, as the work is to be judged for versatility of form and content as well as for merit of particular selection. A prize will also be awarded for the best short story, or collection of short stories. Why let an honor be given to someone else, when you yourself are capable of attaining it?

—The Editor.

by Margaret E. Jones

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## TWO STATUES WALK ABROAD

The goddesses that protect the portals of Queens-Chicora could hold no more appropriate places. Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, and mistress of feminine charm, has, we hope, shed some of her influence through the halls. Especially do we desire the wisdom that Minerva has imparted so freely to the women of past ages.

Minerva plays protectress, but she brandishes her spear in vain, for we feel that there is safety under the guardianship of Jupiter (Dr. Frazer). Jenny and Mr. Powell have also encroached upon Minerva's authority, but we hope they have not lost the favor of this fair goddess. If so, woe to these trespassers who know not where to turn—whose disfavor is worse—a goddess's or—?

Dear Venus has not quite forgotten her duty, and has bestowed *some* of her blue-eyed devilishness upon the queens. But alas! Where is cupid and his file of lovers? Venus *has* almost forgotten us in that respect; or has Jupiter overruled the powerful goddess? Notwithstanding, the fair Aphrodite does bring her son cupid to this secluded hall on Saturday nights, for she is not to be outdone for more than a few days.

Wish the queens luck, fair deities. Impart your favors and blessings; wield your thunderbolts and wisdom—so that we may make Jupiter smile, and the other gods and goddesses (the faculty) clap their hands because we know our lessons.

*by Janet Benn*

## “BELLE MAISON”

Just outside of Sleepy Oaks, there stands a large brick house, surrounded by trees and shrubbery. In front, between the two driveways, is an overgrown, blue-green lake. The house has no window panes and the once exquisitely carved doors are broken and hang loose on their hinges. On nights when the wind is wild, these doors creak and bang. This house, which was called “Belle Maison,” was built by a Mr. Jonathan Logan and was the one to which he brought his bride who died there six months later on a stormy night. In loneliness and despair he sold the house and moved away.

The house had always been considered queerly built because at the end of the spacious hall there were two doors, one leading into the back part of the house, while the other was concealed by heavy velvet curtains. This door was rarely closed but the curtains were always drawn. It led into an alcove which was never used by Mr. Logan nor the next occupant, a Mr. Vallencourt, who bought it after Mr. Logan's death. Because Mr. Vallencourt was wealthy and influential people soon flocked to him. He opened his handsome home to everyone and often entertained his young friends who dearly loved to come there.

One night, in the middle of December, he entertained with a ball for his niece and nephew. Everybody of any consequence over fifteen years of age was invited. The house had been imposingly decorated by artists brought from Atlanta. The alcove was designed for the ladies' dressing room; cut off from the hallway by the velvet curtains. The dining





room was made more luxurious, and a handsome banquet table was provided for the occasion. Also, in the room was a beautifully carved sideboard, on which stood Mr. Vallecourt's most valued treasure, a cut glass pitcher and six goblets, which were ornamented with sparkling gems of real worth. It had been his great-great-grandfather's wedding gift to his wife and had come from Egypt two centuries before.

On the night of the ball, Mr. Vallencourt was attired in full dress—immaculate in every detail, and was a fit host for the magnificence displayed in his surroundings. Though only forty-five, there were streaks of gray in his once dark hair. Because he was both wealthy and possessed of remarkable personal charm, people often wondered why he had never married.

In town, at the time of the ball, was a wealthy widow, Mrs. Arsdale, who was said to own a magnificent diamond brooch, which was three inches in diameter and which sparkled like icicles in the sun, dazzling the eye with its brilliance. Strange to say, she had never been seen to wear it. But on the night of the ball she wore it with great assurance. It was the only ornament on her severely cut, but handsome gown. The news spread quickly and people were seen to approach her, with poorly veiled eagerness, for a glimpse of the famous jewel.

During the evening Mrs. Arsdale went into the alcove in company with several ladies. Whether weary of the attention she attracted or seeking to avoid being conspicuous was a matter of conjecture. In any event, she remained in the alcove alone. Thirty minutes later a butler discovered Mrs. Arsdale lying upon a sofa as if asleep. Cautiously approaching for



a glimpse of the much-talked-of diamond, he was horrified to find it gone and in its place a rent in her beautiful gown and a clot of crimson blood. He was so shocked that he could scarcely totter to summon assistance. Almost immediately the guests were crowding toward the alcove to discover that Mrs. Arsdale was dead. The butler was held, but it was learned to the amazement of all that Mr. Vallencourt had disappeared.

Some days later the body of Mr. Vallencourt floated to the surface of the then beautiful lake. Tightly clasped in his right hand was what appeared to be Mrs. Arsdale brooch, but on closer inspection was found to be only a small piece of the material of her evening gown, and in his left hand he held the paper knife of unusual and intricate design, which once had ornamented the desk in the alcove. What had become of the diamond brooch?

So deep was the mystery and so horrible the tragedy, that no one ever entered "Belle Maison" again, and everything remains to this day as it was on the night of that fatal ball. It is occupied by bats, rats and mice, while memories and unsolved mysteries stalk abroad.



## Concerning New Books

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*Field of Honor*—By Donn Byrne, Century. 1929.

About the time that Byrne's *The Wind Bloweth* appeared in 1922, The Librarian was under assignment to do innumerable pages relative to the latter part of the Middle Ages. Now, the Librarian believes with Jean d' Arc that it isn't the last impiety to be ignorant, but when a friend insinuated that her education was not complete unless she was familiar with Byrne, she bought immediately his *Field of Honor* and resolved to beg, borrow, steal—or buy—*The Wind Bloweth* at a later day.

*Field of Honor* is a novel of the Napoleonic wars wherein one sees more of his bitter foe, Castlereagh, British Minister of War, than of Napoleon. Young Garret Dillon, an Irishman bent on serving his country, becomes the Secretary of Castlereagh and thereby brings upon himself a temporary alienation from his own beloved wife, Jocelyn, who hated the British Minister. Eventually, the wife and his little son return to Derrymore, Garret's homestead, and he resigns his London post.

There are sea battles, intrigues with their code messages, London balls, and various other historic happenings in the wide scope of the book. My own preference is for Byrne's handling of the Wordsworth-Vallon incident. Garrod in his *Wordsworths Essays and Lectures* has done nothing of the kind. Byrne's treatment is remarkable because of the excerpts from Wordsworth that he makes use of, pas-



sages that throw a cloak of spiritual triumph over facts about which critics have trumpeted long and loud. He does not succeed so well with the Shelley pages. The Godwins, Wollstonecrafts, Trelawny, and Shelley . . . one feels as if they quarrel and bicker endlessly. We confess a predilection about this, though.

One other simple incident deserves mention: the prayer of Jocelyn that Garret may be kept from evil, a most dramatic outcry, the expression of a grief-torn soul . . . lonely, but not without the blessings of belief in God and love for her husband.

As far as contemporaneity goes, the book has further interest because of the fact that Thurston Macaulay, who has recently written a complete biographical and critical study of Byrne (*Donn Byrne: Bard of Armagh*) has in the November North American Review an article entitled, "Donn Byrne's Ireland."

—Rena Harrell.

*Grass Blades from a Cinnamon Garden*—By Lilian May Miller. Published by The Japan Advertiser, Tokio, Japan, 1927.

"Among my cinnamon trees, alone,  
I seize my lute and sit and croon;  
No ear to hear me, save my own,  
No eye to see me—save the moon."

—*Old Chinese Poem.*

It is around this old Chinese poem that the author builds her most delightful book of verse.

Lilian May Miller, a modern poet, by circumstance educated and grown to womanhood in the Land of the Rising Sun, paints for us in her book of

poems true pictures of the life and scenes she has known intimately since childhood.

In her poems simplicity and exquisiteness of texture prevail. We find in them imagery, colorful diction, and music, with no hint of the morbid. Miss Miller has stepped apace on Oriental shoes and we must follow eagerly after her in quest of every word-picture she has to give us; and well we might, for her point of view is thoroughly in sympathy with the thoughts and feelings of her yellow friends. Her early and close relationship with the Japanese brought out in her the love of the beautiful, as we see it in "Brush Pictures of the Celestial Mountain."

#### I. DAWN

"I saw shy Fuji of an early morn  
Robed in an opalescent mist,  
Like some quaint maiden, delicate, highborn,  
In pearl-grey kimona, cloud-kissed,  
Stolen away alone to greet the dawn,  
Thinking to see no strangers by the sea;  
And when I smiled and looked too eagerly,  
She hid her face behind a sleeve of fawn.

#### II. MORNING

"A dream-white Fuji high above the sea,  
Hovering with outspread wings against a sky  
Blue-grey, the sea a turquoise in the sun—  
While far below a white-sailed junk skims by."

Her love of the poetic and artistic are clearly seen in "The Japanese Artist."

"With ten strokes he built a mountain,  
With two strokes a tree—  
And then with the most delightful smile  
He gazed through the lattice door awhile,  
And with *one* stroke brushed in the boundless sea!"

Lillian Miller early began to write and draw, and to have her poems printed in "The Japan Advertiser," the largest foreign daily in Japan. Aided by the editor of this newspaper, Miss Miller was later enabled to have a collection of her poems printed and bound in an unique and Oriental fashion, and illustrated by her own woodblocks.

We find this book, "Grass Blades from a Cinnamon Garden," exquisite and delightful. What is more real than

"Winter is a tiger, old and white,

Crouching above the pale, dead earth

And spitting snow into her dumb bruised face"?  
What more radiant than "Spring in a Japanese Garden"?

"Spring has slipped over my winding wall's tiled rim,

Warm with the melting, golden breath of April weather;

How do I know?

The daphnes cluster fragrantly together,

The peach blooms red, the willow branches blow  
Above my slender lacquer bridge.

Near the long, silver-rippled lake

Purple wisteria vines awake,

And soft-pronged chalice rise green and slim

From each dark, starry ring

Of azalea leaves in my azalea bower;

And there in one this dappled noon, I found her—  
Spring—Soft—bathing in a sudden, slanting  
April shower!"

—*Rebekah Locklin Hassell.*



*Coronet*—By Manuel Komroff. Published by Coward McCann. 1930.

This is a painfully absorbing and impressive book. It is the history, in narrative form, of the French Revolution—of the conquests of Napoleon—of his ghastly and terrible “Grand March” in Russia. The story of this catastrophe is a terrible one well told. The horrors that were suffered by his men, a great many of them were children, are abominable. Two young French boys lived for days in the frozen carcass of a dead horse—for want of better shelter. The gory details are hideous, but it is an excellent conception of the gruesomeness of war.

The coronet from which the book gets its name is traced throughout the novel from generation to generation. There seems to be some evil, intangible omen, attached to it, which causes the owner in every case to be very unhappy and miserable. It was made by a goldsmith, and then lost for ages. A scavenger, cleaning out a grave years later, found this same ornament disshapened and covered with dried clay. Not comprehending its ultimate value, he sold it to a smith for a paltry sum. This smith, in fear of being detected as a cheat, sold it to a jeweler, who repaired the crown and replaced some of the lost gems with artificial stones. He then, in turn, lived in dread of being found out, and several times hid the coronet and resolved not to display it for fear of being arrested—and so on down through the generations this same fate seemed attached to the coronet.

The book, though lengthy, grasps and holds the attention of the reader by some indefinable force. One should read it not only for its vivid description and interpretation, but for its characterizations of humans, and of Napoleon in particular.

—*Janice Newton.*

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by Marion Townend

## ANOTHER CHAT ABOUT BOOKS

I read somewhere that a dull day is an unplanned day—and if you think about it, I believe you'll agree. When you take pains to ask in advance certain interesting friends to call, you'll be guaranteed of good company and a pleasant evening. . . . If you plan your meals ahead they are not apt to be monotonous. If you carefully scan the radio column in the newspaper and tune in just for that one good hour of music (no radio can continue to be entertaining eight hours a day) you'll enjoy it. If you look over the book reviews and try to discover just what book might appeal to you—and not pick up just anything to yawn over—*then* you're not likely to be bored.

Now my part in this sermon on boredom is to help you select books which will make for an interesting day. . . . Yet as I scan the list of new books I've been reading lately, I feel a certain hesitancy. For with all my care in my selection of reading, I find that I am enthusiastic about only one book. Now if I were to discuss books in general, I could name dozens on end to be enthusiastic about. . . . but my topic is new books. . . . I'll write a few words about these books anyway and let you make up your own mind about them. At least they aren't dull. They're stimulating, and for the most part well-written. And maybe I'm getting too critical!

*The book*—the finest thing I've read lately, is *Years of Grace* by Margaret Ayer Barnes. Here is a book! And the author of the calibre of Edith Wharton. The story carries us from a little Victorian girl up to modern times (from about 1880 to the last decade). Susan Ertz attempted the same thing in

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her *Galaxy*, but only succeeded in accomplishing a careful chronicling of social events with the help of a few lay-figures. In *Years of Grace*, however, the changing fashions, morals, and events are the very air of the story breathed by real flesh and blood characters in whom we are vitally interested. Jane, Flora, Andre Stephen, and restless, charming, exotic Jimmy. If you read it, I'll wager you'll fall in love with Jimmy!

Louis Bromfield is a favorite of mine, but I must admit a little disappointment in his latest—*Twenty-Four Hours*. It is a definite achievement—and quite original—but O, he has grown so cynical! So few of his characters are warm with the milk of human kindness. In sympathy he does not compare with his great trilogy. The idea of his book is unique in writing—yet probably has occurred to everyone of us at some time or another. Haven't you ever thought—that during a night and day while you are living your life in your world, hundreds of others are having different experiences, different thoughts, different joys and sorrows in theirs?

From a dinner party, with which the book opens, Bromfield follows each of the characters—not home, for the night is yet young according to New York time—to his destination, and we enter into the life—the thoughts of each of them. There is ennui, romance, ambition, a murder—but all cleverly worked out so that their individual destinies affect each other.

*By the Waters of Manhattan*, a new novel by one named Reznikof—a story of the struggles of a Jewish family in Europe and later in New York—is sincere writing—but unfinished in form.

At present I am reading Andre Maurios' *Life of*  
*Thirty-five*





Byron—Maurois who wrote the charming *Ariel* (life of Shelley) and *Disraeli*. I'm afraid, however, that Byron the poet has not been given as much consideration as Byron the man. And Byron the poet is so far superior! The book has rather a morbid fascination—but somehow tends to make the reader curl his lip in some disgust at the cruel exploits of a man who had never known restraints. Byron was the supreme egoist and as such trampled on the feelings of the world. For a man of such genius his life was bitter . . . or did he have genius because his life was bitter? Byron himself said, "For a man to be a poet . . . he must be in love or miserable."

Anne Douglass Sedgwick—of *Little French Girl* fame, has a new book—so new I don't believe it's published yet, called *Phillipa*. The author, by the way, is coming to this country this fall.

Sheila Kaye-Smith has a new one *Shepherds in Sackcloth*. Sounds rather ponderous, but probably worth the pondering.

The indefatigable Andre Maurois has another new book which William Lyon Phelps of Yale calls the most human literary result of the war and the best thing he's yet written, *The Silence of Mr. Sackcloth*. Sounds rather ponderous, but probably of the author and of the man recommending it.

If you liked *Dusty Answer* you'll very probably like *A Note in Music* by Rosamunde Lehman. Someone called her a modern prose Keats. I'll be anxious to read her latest.

W. Sommerset Maughn, better known as a dramatist, has written a new novel *Cakes and Ale*—the scene being in England and America. His book, *Of Human Bondage*, I consider nearly as fine as Roland's *Jean Christophe* and certainly is a recommendation to me for other books of his.

And before I confuse you with too many titles, I will close—hoping you don't have a dull day.



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